



WEEKLY REPORT

State Senator Gary Nodler
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GROWTH OF CROWDER COLLEGE SERVES AS A REMINDER OF THE HIGH QUALITY EDUCATION THIS SCHOOL PROVIDES

The Missouri Senate this week began debate on legislation that would reform Missouri's workers' compensation laws.

Missouri's workers' comp laws have been identified as a major reason for job loss in this state and changes are long overdue. Our current laws have adversely affected both small and large businesses in Southwest Missouri.

Proposed changes are actually quite simple – the bill revises the definition of compensable injury. The measure would require that work be “the prevailing” factor in an injury rather than “a substantial” factor.

I have backed workers' comp reform since my election to the Missouri Senate, while Rep. Kevin Wilson, R-Neosho, and Rep. Steve Hunter, R-Joplin, have championed this issue over in the House of Representatives.

In both the Senate and the House, Democrats are trying to block this reform measure and I expect that there will be many more hours of debate. I will continue to keep you updated on this issue.

April is National Community College Month, and I want to take this opportunity to encourage all students and parents to learn more about our own local community college – Crowder College in Neosho.

We are fortunate to have such a fine institution in our own backyard. Since its founding in 1963, Crowder has provided a high-quality education at an affordable price. In fact, I attended Crowder College.

The college has received national attention for its remarkable alternative energy program with students competing in numerous solar car races, challenging much larger four-year colleges.

Crowder has seen a 52 percent increase in enrollment since the 2000-2001 school year, growing from 1,719 to 2,606 in January of this year.

This rapid growth serves as a reminder of the quality of education provided at this fine institution.

A post-secondary education is becoming increasingly important in our rapidly changing world. The College Board reports that the gap in earnings between those with a high school diploma and those with a bachelor degree or higher exceeds \$1 million over the course of a lifetime.

Crowder, along with other community colleges throughout Missouri, have adapted their policies to accommodate those seeking two-year degrees and those who wish to transfer to a four-year institution and receive a baccalaureate degree.

Community colleges have recognized that the world is changing rapidly and higher education must change with the times. The days when an 18-year-old high school graduate could go straight into a well-paying job are over. Young people need training and education in order to succeed.

I would be remiss if I did not give credit to Crowder's president, Dr. Kent Farnsworth, for leading the college during this unprecedented growth period. Dr. Farnsworth recently announced that he would be retiring from Crowder after 19 years at the helm.

I'm certain I speak for the all of Southwest Missouri when I thank Dr. Farnsworth for his enormous contributions to Crowder College.

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